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Own Weapon Hit Nixon, Ex-Aide Says

Cuban Invasion Plans Kept Secret for Security: Klein

SAN DIEGO, Calif. (CP)—Richard M. Nixon's former press secretary said yesterday that Nixon's desire to keep the secret of Cuban invasion plans caused him to be "clubbed" by President Kennedy in the 1960 campaign.

Herbert G. Klein, press secretary for Nixon during the 1960 presidential campaign and now editor of the San Diego Union, said Nixon had wanted to make Cuban intervention a campaign issue but did not do so for security reasons.

When Kennedy came out for Cuban intervention, Klein said, "The effect was that in a crucial period of the campaign Mr. Nixon was being clubbed with his own weapon. And, because he had a strong sense of his responsibility to protect security, he had no choice but to argue against Mr. Kennedy, and thus against a policy he previously originated himself."

KLEIN'S VERSION of the fact that appeared in Sunday edition of The Union.

He called it a "story we at the Nixon staff reported to [during the 1960 campaign]."

"It is the story of how the Cuban invasion was kept secret," he said. "When the former vice president was assassinated last year in his new book, 'Secrets and Lies,' was discussed last week by the president."

Klein said he was on a staff known for being well-trained in the art of keeping secrets.

"Frequently we discussed among ourselves the handling of the Cuban issue within security circles," Klein said. "We heard the rumor that the Kennedy staff feared the beach assault would take place before the election. We suspected this was the reason why, Oct. 20, Mr. Kennedy proposed direct intervention."

"FOR THE vice president and his staff, the angriest moments of the campaign took place on Oct. 20, on the eve of the fifth television debate between Nixon and Kennedy. Mr. Kennedy, in New York when Mr. Kennedy was in the day, made a statement which directly outlined the secret program which was being carried out—and which we had for security reasons kept secret."

Here is what Klein said had happened.

"First: On Jan. 1, 1960, then head of the Central Intelligence Agency, and Mr. Kennedy had concurred in a decision that he had been briefed with particular emphasis on Cuba and Africa. Nothing was said to the two top reporters. They knew that this was in secret with orders given Mr. Dulles, President Eisenhower."

"Second: Nixon had captured the initiative on the Cuban issue with his Miami statement calling for a quarantine against Cuba. And in the best co-ordination of the campaign, the administration had followed with no putting this into effect."

"IT SEEMED obvious," Klein said, "that Mr. Kennedy was at a disadvantage after realizing he was being outmaneuvered at a crucial point in the campaign, was still in possession of secret material he had given at the Dulles briefing. The House was querulous. He told Mr. Kennedy that he had formed about the Cuban issue. Others told us President Eisenhower was angry over the disclosure."

"In the light of what I know of happenings at that time, I am, of course, surprised last week at Mr. Dulles' statement which corroborates President Kennedy's position that he was not in the troop training."

In a statement, Mr. Dulles said the intelligence community was in a difficult situation. The situation was not a secret, but it was a secret.